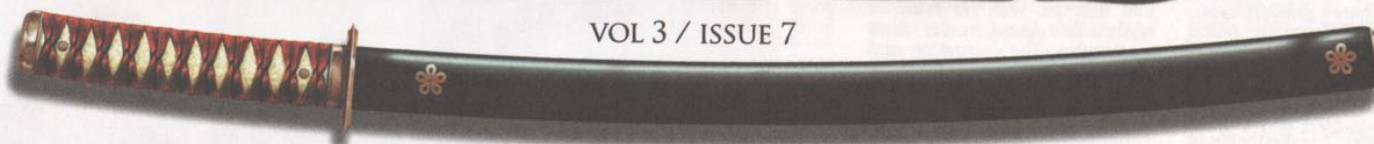


THE IMPERIAL HERALD

VOL 3 / ISSUE 7



LEGEND OF THE FIVE RINGS INTERACTIVE STORYLINE COLLECTIBLE CARD & ROLEPLAYING GAMES

The Night is Darkest...

BY BRYAN REESE

I am sure you have heard by now, the next base set will be called Emperor Edition, and Before the Dawn is the first expansion to feature dual-bugged cards. In fact every card from Before the Dawn, save the strongholds, are dual-bugged, meaning they will all be legal for both Celestial Edition and Emperor Edition. This is pretty exciting, but for a different reason than you might think.

Historically, the first dual-bugged set was designed primarily with the current arc in mind, while making sure it was headed in the direction design wanted to go for the following arc. However, with Emperor Edition, we got to work far earlier than normal, getting the framework 95% solidified by the time Before the Dawn was due to be designed. This means Before the Dawn is not only great for Celestial Edition, but most of the Emperor Edition themes get their first cards here. I am now going to show you a few of those cards that I personally love and am looking forward to playing in my own decks.

DESTRUCTIVE PRIORITIES



Destructive Priorities is interesting to me on multiple levels. First, it is a political kata that deals with honor losses. This might make no sense at first, but upon thinking about it, I feel it is a pretty clever idea. Rather than the standard martial kata we have grown accustomed to, this is a mental kata that the sharpest courtiers undergo to prepare for the mental warfare

that they must undergo when dealing with a court life.

Beyond that, Destructive Priorities is a very strong card, which gives dishonor decks what they have wanted for so long, being able to buy someone for full and make someone else lose the honor rather than gaining it themselves. I suspect that Destructive Priorities will become a staple in both Celestial Edition and Emperor Edition.

THE WORLD DISAPPEARS



The World Disappears is surely going to become a staple for Monk decks of all kinds. Recursion is rare for sure, and to be able to take back any Kiho is simply nothing short of amazing. Whether you are a Spider Monk player getting back *No Pure Breaths*, a Dragon Monk player getting back *One with the Flame*, or the new Phoenix Henshin Monk deck getting

back one of their great tools yet to come, no Monk deck will be complete without *The World Disappears*.

And with a three focus value, it can be very valuable for Enlightenment, getting back any of the kiho that they use to great effect.

ONE ACTION, TWO STRIKES



One Action, Two Strikes is a new take on an old favorite: Mushin. While a card like Mushin is not balanced in this day and age, *One Action, Two Strikes* has enough restrictions to balance it, but not so many as to render it useless. Far from it, actually, as any experienced player will be able to recognize right off the bat. Tempo is one of the most powerful tools in battle

and this card gives you tempo in spades. Allowing you to take two additional battle actions will allow you to deal with your opponent's key forces before they have a chance to hurt you. Combine this with *Sneak Attack*, and the attacker can get off three battle actions before the defender can take two. This can ruin anyone's day. Time to take another look at those Swift Counterattacks.

UNORTHODOX ATTACK



Unorthodox Attack might seem like a very plain, and simple card, but that is because of one reason; it is. In its simplicity however, lies a great strength. With its three focus value, it is a good tool for both dueling decks and fighting off dueling decks. However, its true strength comes from its nearly unstoppable battle action. With only the bare minimum of restrictions (an

unbowed samurai), you can bow any enemy card. *Unorthodox Attack* does not care about the enemy's force, chi, personal honor, gold cost, honorable status, attachments, nothing. Quite frequently you can find yourself facing a dangerous personality but no way to get through his attachments, or a dangerous attachment with no way to deal with it. *Unorthodox Attack* gives you the versatility you need to deal with almost any

to force that. Destructive Priorities is a very strong card, which gives dishonor decks what they have wanted for so long, being able to buy someone for full and make someone else lose the honor rather than gaining it themselves. I suspect that Destructive Priorities will become a staple in both Celestial Edition and Emperor Edition.

And with a three focus value, it can be very valuable for Enlightenment, getting back any of the kihos that they use to great effect.

EBISU'S HONESTY



Ebisu's Honesty is a Celestial tailor made for honor decks, and there is no bad part about this card. First it has a trait that gives all of your provinces +2 strength, which can be huge both early and mid-game. Military decks are generally focused at taking seven and occasionally eight strength provinces. If you can get your provinces up to eight all the time, and possibly even nine with some strongholds, suddenly those first couple early game attacks become a lot more difficult. Often their choices will be to not attack, or to invest more resources into the attack, both of which are good for you.

The second aspect of *Ebisu's Honesty* is good both against the military player and an honor player. It allows you to destroy your rightmost province to gain four honor. Obviously this will generally be used to push you over the 40 honor threshold. If this allows you to cross a turn early, that is well worth a province, even against a military deck. I think *Ebisu's Honesty* is going to give some of the more powerful Celestials a run for their money.

deal with your opponent's key forces before they have a chance to hurt you. Combine this with *Sneak Attack*, and the attacker can get off three battle actions before the defender can take two. This can ruin anyone's day. Time to take another look at those *Swift Counterattack*.

force, chi, personal honor, gold cost, honorable status, attachments, nothing. Quite frequently you can find yourself facing a dangerous personality but no way to get through his attachments, or a dangerous attachment with no way to deal with it. *Unorthodox Attack* gives you the versatility you need to deal with almost any threat which your opponent can throw your way.

WORDS OF CONSECRATION



Words of Consecration is a great new spell for both honor and dishonor decks. First, when it enters play attached to an Air Shugenja, it will cause a 1 point honor gain or loss, your choice. This is always a handy tool to have. Not only can you further your own victory condition, but if the strategy of the situations allows for it, you can help to deny your opponent their victory condition. You can hit them for a one point loss to knock them under 40 honor, or under their personality's honor requirements, forcing them to waste gold to buy their people. Or, if playing against dishonor, you can use the gain on yourself to keep yourself out of harm's way. A truly tricky player can make themselves lose honor so they can play their *Unfortunate Incident*. There is a lot of hidden strategy in this trait. On top of this, you get the ability that can give you honor when your opponent's best people attack which is obviously good for honor decks.

I hope this little preview of *Before the Dawn* has been intriguing. When looking at these cards think not only of the decks you have now in Celestial Edition, but the decks you will be playing in the future. A Crab player may not care for *Destructive Priorities* now, but he will certainly want it for his Yasuki deck in Emperor Edition. A Crane player may not care for *Words of Consecration* now, but he will certainly want it for his Asahina deck in Emperor Edition. Don't look too far ahead however, Celestial Edition isn't quite over yet!

Before the Dawn: Storyline Update

BY SHAWN CARMAN

The god-beast has been slain. The Ebon Daughter has been executed. The Dark Oracle of Fire has been driven from the Empire, wounded so grievously that it requires all his sinister power merely to keep him alive.

And yet the Destroyers press onward.

Driven by their mad goddess' tireless quest for the Black Scroll that contains the essence of Kyoso no Oni, the Destroyers have churned the Crab lands into blood-soaked mud beneath their feet, and now the Scorpion lands endure the same brutality. The clans stand united in the service of the Divine Empress, but the stresses of a war without end fray the edges of their alliances with one another. In what may be the final days of the war with the Destroyer, the clans must put aside all difference and enmity

or be trod into ash under the iron heels of an army that seems to those in the Empire to be utterly without end.

The ranks of the Destroyers are not without end, however, and this fact is proven when the sons of Hiruma, long trapped behind enemy lines, emerge from their place of hiding to begin an assault on the enemy's rear guard. Concealed within the ruins of Kyuden Hida, the Hiruma forces exact a terrible cost from the Destroyers, eager for repayment for their own suffering.

With the Dark Oracle absent

from the conflict in the north, the Yobanjin forces are routed and the northern front largely absent of open warfare. The Phoenix, eager for peace but aware that it cannot come without the defeat of the enemy, enter their forces in the battle in earnest, with the order of the Asako Inquisitors lending their full might to the southern conflict under the direction of Isawa Mitsuko, the Master of Air. Their order's history of punishing those who practice forbidden forms of magic brings much needed leverage against the dark sorceries of the Destroyers.

Even as the combined forces of the Empire struggle to hold the line against their enemies, the Lion stand among them, ever at the forefront of the battle. At the same time, however, the Lion make preparation for the potential of the Destroyers to reach the edge of the Scorpion lands and push forward into the southern Lion provinces on their way toward the Imperial City. The southern end of Shamate Pass, the only significant passage between the lands of the Lion and Scorpion, have always been under the protection of the Lion; now the Matsu daimyo has sworn that

the enemy shall not pass beyond Shamate so long as a member of her family draws breath. The Lion draw a line in the soil at Shamate Keep, and swear that the enemy, should they reach the keep, shall pass no farther.

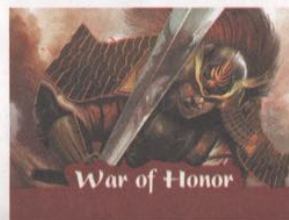
It is a dark and terrible time for the Empire, one filled with defeat and blood, but the darkest hours of the night are those just before the break of dawn...



Forgotten Legacy



To Begin Again



War of Honor



Before The Dawn



Preview: Great Clans

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Forgotten Legacy

BY SHAWN CARMIN

This summer, the direct-to-player set *Forgotten Legacy* will be released, and will return to the center stage of the L5R storyline, at least briefly, the noble and tragic Naga race, beloved by many for years. The Naga's return to the storyline comes at a terrible price, however, and many of the dark secrets of their ancient history will be examined. Lore once lost will be learned once again, this time by mankind and perhaps by the Naga's enemies as well.

Near the Empire's greatest forest, the Shinomen Tower is found in ruins, all occupants missing or dead. The faces of the dead are frozen in a mask of absolute horror.

In the Imperial City, the Embassy of the Naga race is burned to the ground. No remains of the Mara, mankind's greatest friend among that noble race, can be found.

In the lands of the Crab, the venerable sensei Hida Fubatsu disappears without a trace, his forge destroyed, his students slain.

On the open seas, an entire Mantis commercial fleet, more than one dozen vessels, is destroyed by an unknown force with no survivors remaining. What little wreckage is recovered indicates that each of the vessels was destroyed utterly, shattered to fragments.

In the lands of the Dragon and Unicorn, the retired parents of the Clan Champions disappear

into thin air, with no evidence of their fate found by the clan's magistrates. The frustration and the wrath of the clans, left without a target, festers and threatens to consume them.

Throughout the Empire, stories of mysterious attacks, of strange creatures unlike anything ever seen before, but each bearing a strange resemblance to the Naga, unseen in Rokugan for generations, begin to reach the Imperial City. With her subjects hungry for answers, the Divine Empress dispatches the First Magistrate, one of the foremost lieutenants of the Emerald Champion, to discover the truth behind the oddities taking place. The Mantis dispatch their bounty hunters for the same purpose, and the Dragon, Unicorn, and Crab scour the Empire for those who have gone missing.

In the depths of the Shinomen, the Naga writhe in their sleep. Some scream. Some die. And

some rise like the dead, taking up arms against the humans while

**Will the Naga's
cursed past
bring about their
extinction, and
perhaps that of
mankind?**

strange monstrosities from across the sands and from deep within the jungles of the former Ivory Kingdoms hunt man throughout the Empire. The samurai of Rokugan are left to wonder what mysteries of the Naga people haunt them in this modern age, and some few wonder privately...

Have mankind's only true allies turned against them?

**Abandoned...
Forgotten...
Make the
Humansss
Remember!**

**FORGOTTEN
LEGACY**

Forgotten Legacy: A trip to Eternity

BY BRYAN REESE

Forgotten Legacy is the latest Direct to Player expansion for L5R. For anyone unfamiliar, a Direct to Player expansion is a set that AEG releases directly to its players. It contains a full playset of cards (1 copy of each unique and 3 copies of each non-unique) for about \$100 USD. We are also usually able to do something pretty cool and special with the set as well, since we do not have the normal packaging costs. *Forgotten Legacy* is no different, but I am not going to talk about the premium packaging in this article.

Today I am talking to you about Eternity, and how it relates to *Forgotten Legacy*. In *Forgotten Legacy*, we are introducing a new bug: 永. The Eternity bug will extend the legality of the card it appears on by one arc further than normal. So, in the case of *Forgotten Legacy*, the Eternity bug will indicate a card is legal

will be legal for a long time, and is a card you will definitely want to have. Before we begin discussing the mechanics, you may be asking yourself, how is this going to work with the existing Border Keep? When you construct your deck and you choose which cards are going into it, you will now choose which Border Keep you will be

For this drawback, you get a second ability that is the obvious reason to choose this Border Keep. Once per game, you can take up to three cards from your fate hand, put them at the bottom of your deck, and draw cards equal to the number you put at the bottom. While you lose the late game hunt for the dynasty cards you need, you gain a late game hunt for the fate cards you need. This provides an interesting and strategic choice. Both Border Keeps are very good, which one will you play with for your deck?

Like Border Keep, *Bamboo Harvesters* experienced is bugged for Celestial Emperor and beyond. Also like

There is a lot more about *Forgotten Legacy* to be excited about, including the four other Eternity bugged cards, but we will preview those at another time. As with most cards from Direct to Player sets, Border Keep and *Bamboo Harvesters* will not be made available outside of



bug: 永. The Eternity bug will extend the legality of the card it appears on by one arc further than normal. So, in the case of Forgotten Legacy, the Eternity bug will indicate a card is legal for Celestial, Emperor, and the arc following Emperor, giving your cards a touch of Eternity with a longer lifespan.

Six cards in total will feature the Eternity bug. These six have been chosen not because they are weak, largely unplayable cards that we know will stand no chance to impact the future. Rather we took six of the best cards from the set and gave them the Eternity bug. This is a Direct To Player set that every L5R player should want for himself as it will feature many great cards, six of which will have the Eternity bug. Let's look at two of them now.

First up is the new, experienced *Border Keep*. It is bugged for Celestial, Emperor, and Eternity, so it



yourself, how is this going to work with the existing *Border Keep*? When you construct your deck and you choose which cards are going into it, you will now choose which *Border Keep* you will be using for your deck. Like any other card in your deck, once you enter a tournament, you are not allowed to change which *Border Keep* you are using.

Mechanically, this *Border Keep* has a lot going for it. Like the first *Border Keep*, this version gives you two chances to find a good gold start by moving cards in your provinces to the bottom of your deck. However, in this version you can only use that ability on the first turn, though you can use it twice to maximize your chances of seeing enough holdings early.

late game hunt for the dynasty cards you need, you gain a late game hunt for the fate cards you need. This provides an interesting and strategic choice. Both *Border Keeps* are very good, which one will you play with for your deck?

Like *Border Keep*, *Bamboo Harvesters* experienced is bugged for Celestial, Emperor, and beyond. Also like *Border Keep*, when building your deck, you will need to choose which *Bamboo Harvesters* you are going to play with, and like *Border Keep*, you are provided a new, interesting option without one version of *Bamboo Harvesters* being obviously superior to the other.

The new *Bamboo Harvesters* won't straighten until your third turn and thus will not provide you any gold production on turn two. However, what it does give you is some great card draw throughout the entire game. If you have a healthy hand size, it is merely card cycle, but as the game continues and your hand depletes, *Bamboo Harvesters* experienced is going to be a great way to replenish your hand.

Like *Border Keep*, you are offered a choice in better dynasty production (getting your gold earlier) or better fate production (drawing more cards). I personally think that the choice will be split between the different decks I play. For some decks, the fate cards in my hand are superior than my opponents, though my personalities tend to be weaker. For them, *Bamboo Harvesters* experienced will be the best call. However, some decks will need the increased gold production on turn two to help pay for my really powerful personalities, so for them I will likely choose the basic *Bamboo Harvesters*. Which is going to be more important to you when you build your deck? Who knows, but the only thing to know for sure, is you are going to want to have both options available to you.



preview those at another time. As with most cards from Direct to Player sets, *Border Keep* and *Bamboo Harvesters* will not be made available outside of this product. What that means is if you wish to have the option of which *Border Keep* or *Bamboo Harvesters* is right for your deck, then you will want to pick up *Forgotten Legacy*.

One last bit of cool to leave you on. Like we did with the foil packs, the *Border Keep* and *Bamboo Harvesters* will both be dual sided. On the back of *Border Keep* will be the same card, but it will have the abilities removed, signifying that you have already used both abilities this game. On the back of the *Bamboo Harvesters* will be another identical *Bamboo Harvesters*. This is simply so it has a different back in case it gets shuffled into your deck.

With all of the premium features like this that we are including into *Forgotten Legacy*, you will want to make sure to pick up a copy for your very own!

Volunteer Thanks

BY NICOLAS BONGIU

As you have surely noticed in the previous *Imperial Herald*, the help that volunteers offer to the game we all love and AEG as a company cannot be underestimated. They are an integral part of the L5R community, the constant reminder to everyone that it is unique in many ways.

As we came with the idea of the *Forgotten Legacy* Direct to Player set – about which you have already read articles in this very magazine – we decided to show our appreciation to the volunteers in an unprecedented way, crediting their hard and tireless work onto a card, and dedicating it to all of them, past, present and future.

Willing Spirits is that card, and throughout the rest of Celestial and the entire Emperor Arc, it shall serve as a reminder of the volunteer's participation into making L5R a premium product.



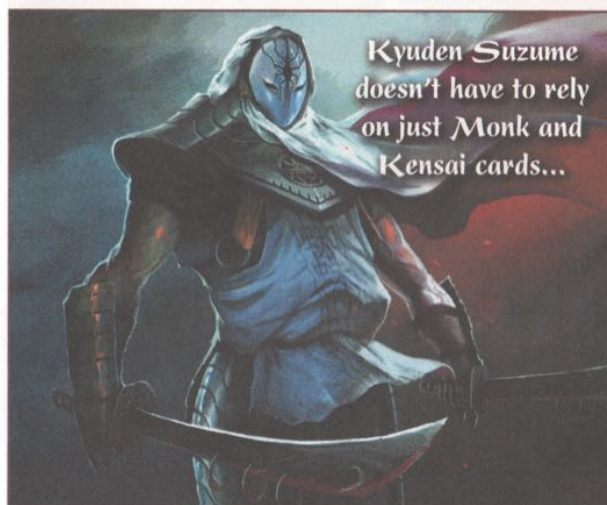
Kyuden Suzume

BY MITCHELL HAMMOND

SAYING GOODBYE TO BREEDER

The Celestial environment this Kotei season has been formed around the perceived power of Crane honor, dishonour and Lion tactician decks. Spider does get a few toys and tricks to play with that puts the Monk Kensai deck into consideration against Breeder to compete against the rest of the field. This deck has some great natural advantages and has recently come together despite its previously relatively poor performance.

With a great gold scheme and *Kyuden Suzume*, they have found a stronghold that works while bowed to perform ranged attacks that are complemented very nicely by a fate deck already filled with easily performed unit destroying actions like *1,000 Cuts Technique*. The most efficient part of the deck is that it supports a personality base that can



straighten their personalities as an Open or Battle action via *Torao*, allowing it to keep its personalities upright on attack or give them the option to defend their provinces on the following turn with their key personalities.

Arguably the best new personality to the monk line-up from recent sets is *Katahide*, and he is an integral part of how the deck really comes together. *Katahide*'s ability to perform additional battle actions is game swinging tempo creation. The easiest example is using *Balance in Water* to pull in one of your opponent's personalities. *Katahide* can then react and perform the stronghold ability, destroying the opposing personality. This card combination also works to move in your *Katahide* to a province where your opponent controls personalities, and still allows you to react with *Katahide* to perform another action such as your stronghold ability. If you have a second *Katahide* in your army, you can effectively take four actions before your opponent

performs his second. That's pretty bloody amazing.

With the addition of *1,000 Cuts Technique* to the fate deck Kensai decks gain another unit destroying action to go along with *Fearless Defense* from Empire at War. *Katahide* can easily perform both actions consecutively with a *Daisho*, as the cost of *Fearless Defense* is bowing all unbowed cards in a unit, which can still be satisfied after performing *1,000 Cuts Technique*. All of these cards are still amazing on their own and easily pull their weight in the deck when performed by other personalities. It is just the combination of support that Monk Kensai has received that makes this deck now shine over its previous versions. *Kyuden Suzume* doesn't have to rely on just Monk and Kensai cards, although *No Pure Breaths* is an amazing auto-include that effectively duplicates your stronghold ability.

Generic Battle actions can go a long way to round out the

deck; look towards *Shameful and Cowardly* or *The Hundred-Hand Strike* if you want to put in actions that reduce force to bring large targets within range of your stronghold. *Shameful and Cowardly* has the added benefit of being strong meta against Honor decks while *The Hundred-Hand Strike* gives you an additional action and doesn't require that you be unbowed to perform it.

Cost of Pride can also work to protect your personalities from ranged attacks, though you shouldn't be easily shot with weapons on your personalities, or be used to straighten or bow personalities whose force is different than their base force. In a deck like Monk Kensai, you should always have a target for *Cost of Pride*.

These are just a few design points and examples of what you can do or will see with a non-Breeder Spider deck – it is decks like these that make me inspired and want to play LSR, and I'm excited by how fun it is to play Monk Kensai!

To Begin Again

BY SHAWN CARMAN

The man once known as Akodo Rokku placed several of his few meager possessions in a small bag and surveyed the room he had called home for the past few years with a surprising sense of detachment.



The man smiled. "Hello, cousin."

"Itoku!" Rokku said suddenly, rushing forward to meet him. "Cousin, I have not seen you in... not since our departure from the ranks of the samurai!" He paused for a moment. "Forgive me, but I do not know your new name."

"Itoku it shall be," the man said with a smile.



When he had first arrived at Bishamon Seido to take up the life of a monk, Rokku had missed his former life a great deal, but he had come to appreciate the simplicity of his new life. To now leave it all behind, to resume some semblance of what his life was before... he had expected to feel something more. Not regret, necessarily, but perhaps at least some sense of loss. Instead, he simply felt acceptance. This was the next step of his existence, of his service to the Celestial Order. Perhaps, as he had sometimes suspected, he was not a man who was capable of achieving enlightenment. Perhaps he was simply a warrior who had embraced a different path leading to the same destination: war. War and death. He exited the small chamber and quietly closed the door. He knew that he would not see its interior again.

A much younger woman stood in the corridor. For a moment, Rokku did not recognize her, because he was so accustomed to seeing her from a distance, and always accompanied by an entourage of others. Seeing her here, alone, took him aback. She seemed so much smaller. "Kiyoko-sama," he said, bowing sharply.

The Kitsu daimyo smiled. "Hello, Rokku-san," she said, her voice soft and gentle. "Is today the day, then? The day of your departure?"

"I... yes," he answered. "Do you know of my departure?"

"I know of your correspondence within the Brotherhood," she said. "Some of the other brothers here have spoken of it. The abbot

himself speaks quite highly of your intentions, although he fears for your safety."

Rokku lowered his head. "I had not realized that it was common knowledge. I hope that I have not burdened you with thoughts of my folly. You have a great deal to worry about as it is."

"I do," she agreed, "but the welfare, both physical and spiritual, of my fellow Lion, will ever be on my mind."

Rokku smiled. "I am no Lion, my lady. Not anymore."

"You do not bear the name, but your soul is a Lion's, and always will be." She bowed. "Good fortunes to you, brother. I wish you safe travel and return."

"Thank you, my lady."

The conversation with the Kitsu daimyo weighed heavily upon Rokku as he left the temple. At every turn, one of his brothers bowed before him. He returned each and every bow, but the depth of the gesture the others offered him made him uncomfortable. He was not worthy of such deference, such respect. Some small part of him felt as if he were deserting his new obligations, but his spirit would not be quiet. He knew this, and it seemed that his brothers knew it as well.

The courtyard of Bishamon Seido was largely empty, as it had been for so many months. It was a burden upon Rokku's heart to see it so depleted, but that was the purpose for his departure. The Empire was in peril, and he would not stand by and see it undone. There were a handful of others in the courtyard, seeming to wait on him, perhaps to offer their respects as well. He did not recognize them, as their attire was not of his sect. One had a familiar countenance, but he could not quite place it...

me, but I do not know your new name."

"Itoku it shall be," the man said with a smile. "We take our example from you, mixing the old lives with the new. Together we shall forge something altogether different."

Rokku smiled, then it faltered. "We, cousin?"

"We," Itoku nodded. He gestured to the other two in the courtyard, an impossibly small woman with delicate, childlike features, and a tall, gaunt man whose face seemed a thin layer of flesh stretched over white bone. "I present my traveling companions for the past few weeks. I suspect they would prefer to introduce themselves."

"I am Tokiko," the tiny woman said with a smile, bowing before him.

"Makito," the tall man said. He did not bow.

Rokku's frown deepened. "Forgive me, but I do not believe that my initial correspondence was directed to you. Itoku, yes, but I have not had the pleasure of meeting you as yet."

Tokiko smiled. "Your initial letters to former members of the Phoenix have sparked quite the philosophical discussion in my home province, friend," she said. "You are something of a sensation among the monasteries."

Rokku's brow furrowed. "That was not my intention."

"Intentions are of little consequence," Makito said.

"Then why have you come?" Rokku pressed.

"Penance," the man replied. "Some of us have sins too great to be forgiven without exceptional opportunity."

"Very well," Rokku said. "I understand the need of a man to atone for his past." He looked to Tokiko. "If you will forgive me, lady, you seem very slight of build for the manner of work we will be performing."

Tokiko only smiled, but Itoku grimaced. "I have traveled with our brother and sister for two weeks now," he said. "I assure you, you need not worry after her... capabilities."

"So we four then," Rokku said. "Together until the front lines, and perhaps beyond." He shook his head. "I had hoped for more."

"More there will be," Itoku assured him. "We are but the first."



When we started out working on War of Honor, we had a few key goals which we wanted to hit. We knew those goals would present us with challenges.

The first item on that list was to create a fun multiplayer environment that could be played with a big range of cards, an environment that appealed across the whole range of existing and potential L5R players.

This was no small task. For new players we had to create something that was complete, that could be a game in its own right. It had to be L5R, but at a level that was as accessible to the newer player as possible. We also knew that our existing players would like it to be completely expandable and compatible with their existing L5R card collections.

In terms of the game play we needed something that added a level of strategic integrity to the long standing issue with all competitive head-to-head multiplayer games – the role of Kingmaker.

Outlining the broad construction of the set was easy. We wanted four pre-made decks that gave a competitive and varied

had many of the same issues as Honor. We quickly recognized that we had to have victory conditions that made each of the traditional themes as equal as possible in a multiplayer environment, so we had to create Paths to Victory that rewarded players for roughly equal achievement in each of the four areas.

How do you give players a more global control over the game interaction? There needed to be a way that not only could you progress towards victory, but that

you could, at least to some extent, protect yourself from becoming victimized for doing so. The early discussions focused on a strategic map where players had an element of control of areas of the board – but integrating that with the basic concept of L5R of attacking and defending provinces was difficult. We were discussing how to indicate this and how to generate different feels for the map, (and how the game could be expanded to the clans that were not featured). We were talking about how pieces needed to get moved around, when Bryan said “Why don’t we have the players

just create the board with hexes, and they can get played out differently each time and be based on the clans that are playing?” From there things sped up a lot, and with the concept of Fortresses as attacking and defending locations it was easy to create restrictions on allying for battles that gave the players a degree of control as to who could attack whom and when.

That was the last piece really in the early design. It was now all about creating balance between the decks, understanding that the Paths to Victory created a different dynamic to the traditional L5R win conditions, and balancing the clans’ hex resources to give a different but balanced feeling. From that point on Bryan and the play testers drove the whole product forward.

With that we had hit all of our key design criteria.

All that remained was to make sure that we had a product that would be great for players wanting to get into the game, that

WAR OF HONOR



games – the role of Kingmaker.

Outlining the broad construction of the set was easy. We wanted four pre-made decks, that gave a competitive and varied game-play experience. We also knew that we wanted them to capture all of the different elements of L5R strategy. Further, we wanted to keep the complexity of the individual cards lower, while retaining all the tactical depth that L5R is known for. That would give us a varied play experience, but without presenting a significant barrier for the new player.

That was still basically going to be the old multiplayer L5R – not a new and exciting experience that changed the way people thought about the game. There were a few things we knew we had to address. An obvious example was the problem that honor presents in the format – basically if you get too close to winning on honor, pro-actively, you will get taken out (and quickly). Dishonor was an almost impossible way of winning, as you could take out individual players, but never control the whole game. Enlightenment



With that we had hit all of our key design criteria.

All that remained was to make sure that we had a product that would be great for players wanting to get into the game, that could be hugely expandable for those already in, and yet have high replay value without adding a card. Or, quite honestly, anything in between. We believe that we have this.

We also believe that we have a visually stunning game that will stand the test of time as a high quality strategy game.

You can play it as stand-alone, with some minor additions or with whole breadth of CCG collectability – you choose. We are very excited to be bringing it to you soon! We hope you enjoy playing it as much as we do, and as much as we enjoyed creating it.

Stronghold Stores

LEVEL 7+ STORES*

Fanfare Sports and Entertainment	Kalamazoo, MI
Gnom	Bielsko-Biala, Poland
Great Escapes Games	Sacramento, CA
Mighty Titans Hobbies & Games	Landing, NJ
Plan B	Barcelona, Spain
The Tower Games	Lawrenceville, GA
Vision Cards & Games	Montgomery, AL
Who's on 1st	Dublin, CA
Alternate Realities	Wichita, KS
Anthem Games	Tampa, FL
Game Night Games	Salt Lake City, UT
Game On!	Puyallup, WA
Gamers World	Dublin, Ireland
Grimoire du Jeu	Quebec, Canada
Libreria Gigamesh	Barcelona, Spain
Livraria Saber	Guaruja, Brazil
The Game Castle	Londonderry, NH
Alianza	Santiago, Chile
Role Games	Marseille, France
Univers Parralèle	Toulouse, France

LEVEL 10+ STORES*

7th Dimension Games	Roslyn, PA
Gamer's Lounge	Quezon City, Philippines
Rocambole	Lille, France
Game Preserve III	Bloomington, IN
Guardian Games	Portland, OR
Kaissa Monokeros	Athens, Greece
Centrum Grier	Bydgoszcz, Poland
Patriot Games	Sheffield, UK
Connection Games	Vancouver, Canada
Gnomes Games	Green Bay, WI

LEVEL 15+ STORES*

Ultra Comix	Nuernberg, Germany
Troll2Jeux	Paris, France

LEVEL 20+ STORES*

PADIS (lvl 21)	Madrid (SP)
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* as of press time.



War of Honor Gameplay

BY JOSHUA AYERS

War of Honor is the official multiplayer rule set for the Legend of the Five Rings CCG. Until now multiplayer was played using, more or less, the standard rules with the exception of adding more seats to the table. The problem was, of course, that the standard rules for L5R were designed for two players.

At its core, War of Honor is built on the L5R Celestial Edition rules, but it contains a few distinct differences to support a more tactical, social, and balanced play-style game. War of Honor works best with three to five players, but will support more. At five players the game experience is distinctly enhanced from the social aspect.

This leads to the first major difference between War of Honor and the base L5R game - the interaction between the player(s) to your left and to your right. In the standard one-on-one game, the player has one ultimate goal, and that is to use his deck's strategy to beat the player across from him. This changes drastically in a multiplayer format. Though your goal as a player is still to win, the game will be very short for the player who treats every opponent at the table as his enemy. Throughout the game you will be encouraged to openly interact (complain, opine, criticize, bribe, flatter, threaten, promise) with the other players. In fact, in some respects, the mental and verbal game dominates deck strength and play skill.

A good example of this type of politicking could be Gordon convincing David that his greatest threat is Elizabeth, and that he will ally with him if he announces an attack against her. Elizabeth will hopefully quickly realize she needs support and call on Jeff, stroking his ego and pulling the 'we both swear fealty to the Scorpion Clan', in order to rally a defense to save her province. To take this example even further, Gordon needs David to commit to battle, in the hopes that it weakens David's forces, so promises him the support to help take Elizabeth's provinces. What

David doesn't know, is that when the battle begins, Gordon will send himself home, leaving David facing both Elizabeth and Jeff. Of course over-abuse of cajoling, broken promises, subterfuge, and flattery will leave a lasting impression, so cautioned and skilled use of these tactics will separate the player who wins from the player who is taken out first.

The second prominent difference in War of Honor is the game is played using hexagonal tiles that are laid in the center of players. These tiles, when laid on the table, form a board that sets the stage for who a player can ally with, who is more susceptible to attack and who is more likely to attack you. The table that the players set up changes every game, ensuring that alliances, tactics, and the play experience is unique each time.

There are three types of tiles: Plains, Toshi Ranbo, and Fortresses. Toshi Ranbo is the first tile played and sets the building point for every following tile. One of the governing rules is that no tile shall be placed more than three away from Toshi Ranbo. This helps prevent linear maps with narrow corridors. Toshi Ranbo also has a benefit in that any Fortress that stays adjacent to it allows the controlling player to increase his hand size by one.

The Fortress tiles represent a player's fortifications on the map. Each player begins the game with three different Fortresses and while a player still controls at least one province they will always have one Fortress. Each Clan in War of Honor gets a set of Fortresses, one with a Battle action, one with a Limited action,

and one with an Open action. These actions are distinct to the play and compliment that Clan's play style. As long as a Fortress is 'face-up' the action printed on it may be played once per turn, as if it were a card in hand.

Finally there are the Plains tiles. These tiles offer a means of protection against aggressive players but can also distance a player from potential allies. When you are defending your Fortress, you can only ask for defending allies from players who have a bordering Fortress to the one being attacked.

The third major difference between War of Honor and the base Legend of the Five Rings game is in the way the game decides the winner. Traditionally, multiplayer is decided by the last man standing, and every once in awhile the player that manages to enlighten or start his turn with 40 honor. Typically, in multiplayer, a player that runs his honor counter over 30 or drops his third Elemental ring paints a large target on themselves. They then spend the next full round trying to hold off the remaining players' assaults.

War of Honor uses a track system, where the first person to the finish line wins. The track has four different paths; Military, Honor, Dishonor, and Enlightenment. Each path has five steps, or milestones, to reach the end. Depending on the path, you take a step for every successful assault launched (Military), for gaining eight honor (gross) in a turn (Honor), for causing eight points of honor loss (gross) in a turn (Dishonor), and for putting a unique ring into play per turn



The table that the players set up changes every game, ensuring that alliances, tactics, and the play experience is unique each time.

(Enlightenment). Though you can't take more than one step down any one path per turn, you can take steps on your opponent's turns. For instance it is possible to put the Ring of Earth down on your turn, taking a step, then on the next player's turn, drop Ring of Air during the Open phase, then ally with him to take down another player's province, thereby taking a total of 3 steps; two steps for Enlightenment (one for each of the two turns) and one step for Military. The Open Phase has never been so important.

All of these differences will influence deck design. Cards that have been collecting dust are suddenly game changers, and serious consideration is put into cards that can at one instant demand alliances and the very next stab someone in the

back. Flexible decks will support 'switch' win conditions so that the player can achieve victory through multiple paths. War of Honor supports open play just as well as playing in the current arc.

AEG has put a lot of effort into this game, and intends to support it with future expansions and cards geared for multiplayer. Included in the War of Honor box set are a Paths of Victory Score Board, 50 Hexagonal Tiles, 4 playable decks (Lion, Dragon, Scorpion, and Phoenix), a Rule Book, as well as other markers to various parts of the game. The Rule Book is truly done in a beautiful format and fully illustrated. It includes examples of game play, the base L5R rules, clarifications, definitions, as well as a Variant Rules section for different win conditions and optional rules for different forms of play.

As Kali-Ma becomes a painful memory and the forces of the Dark Oracle of Fire lay in waste, a new conflict brews between the Lion and the Scorpion. Will you rally behind one of these banners or support the Dragon and Phoenix as they try to arbitrate an end to another war that Rokugan can't afford? Whatever your decision you will learn that the side you choose, may not be the side that chooses you.

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GenCon 2011 Preview

BY NICOLAS BONGIU

GenCon is always an anticipated moment in the gaming industry, and when it comes to the L5R CCG tournaments held there, the anticipation is even higher. As GenCon hosts the L5R World Championships or the North American Championships (when Worlds are held in Europe every other year) its related tournaments traditionally give the chance to their winners to impact the storyline of L5R in a very significant way.

GenCon 2011 will be held from August 4th to 7th. You will find a table below informing you of the various events that will be run as far as L5R CCG is concerned during the entire convention, but more importantly, you will also find a sneak peek of what will be at stake during the most important tournaments: The Main Event and the Second Chance Tournament.

This year, the Main Event will be the L5R World Championships, the biggest event in the L5R tournament scene. While various players will be prequalified for that event thanks to their results over the 2011 Kotel Season, 2010 Jewel Events or past achievements (past World and European Champions), the vast majority of players will try to qualify through the various tournaments held Thursday 4th and Friday 5th. Aptly nicknamed 'grinders', they often pit over 200+ players and only offer a seat to those who win five games during a given 'grinder'.

This year at GenCon, players of the L5R CCG will have the opportunity to make the first of many major impacts on the story and society of Rokugan. The winner of the Main Event tournament will determine the Clan affiliation of one of the most important samurai in the world, one who has the ear of the Empress and is trusted with authority like no other in the whole of the Empire. We cannot reveal exactly what this position is just yet, but it is nothing that has ever been determined by a tournament before! The face of Rokugan has changed dramatically since the events at the end of Celestial Edition, and as we move into the new arc of Emperor Edition, the personality created as a result of this tournament will remain one of the most influential and politically powerful people in the world of L5R!

If you weren't able to qualify through that tough field or simply couldn't arrive in Indianapolis earlier than Saturday, the Second Chance Event awaits you, and its challenge is no less daunting as all the non qualified players and weekend entrants compete for what will be a hotly contested Story Prize!

During the Kotel season of 2011, no potential prize was more desired or contested than the ability to elevate a previously existing personality from L5R to the position of Lesser Fortune. In fact, it was so popular, it was the very first prize chosen on the weekend the season began! For all those who did not have a chance to compete for this prize, GenCon is your second chance! The winner of this tournament will be able to select one personality affiliated with their clan who died during Celestial Edition. That personality will become a Fortune!

We will also offer multiple events on Thursday and Friday for the qualified players or those who do not want to enter the two big tournaments, one of which (at least) will support the War of Honor format detailed in this issue.

Last but not least, RPG fans will be able to partake in various events (tabletop or live action) which will be detailed further as we come closer to GenCon, so check out www.l5r.com for updates.

Every L5R player, experienced or not, will find an event he can join over what is called the best four days in gaming. We will be eagerly awaiting you at the AEG booth or in the CCG Hall for four days of fun and competition over L5R!



GENCON 2011 L5R CCG EVENT LIST

Event Title	Start Date and Time	Event Duration
DAY 1		
L5R World Championships Qualifier	08/04/2011 - 10AM	8 hours
L5R Draft	08/04/2011 - 11AM	7 hours
L5R Invitational	08/04/2011 - Noon	7 hours
L5R Sealed Deck	08/04/2011 - 2PM	4 hours
L5R Draft	08/04/2011 - 2PM	7 hours
DAY 2		
L5R World Championships Qualifier	08/05/2011 - 10AM	8 hours
L5R Draft	08/05/2011 - 11AM	7 hours
L5R Name a Card - War of Honor	08/05/2011 - Noon	8 hours
L5R War of Honor Sealed Event	08/05/2011 - 2PM	4 hours
L5R Draft	08/05/2011 - 2PM	7 hours
DAY 3		
L5R World Championships Main Event	08/06/2011 - 10AM	8 hours
L5R Second Chance Storyline Event	08/06/2011 - 10AM	8 hours
L5R Draft	08/06/2011 - 11AM	7 hours
L5R War of Honor Sealed Event	08/06/2011 - 2PM	4 hours
L5R Draft	08/06/2011 - 2PM	7 hours
DAY 4		
L5R Draft	08/07/2011 - 9AM	7 hours
L5R World Championships Main Event Finals	08/07/2011 - 10AM	6 hours
L5R Second Chance Storyline Event Finals	08/07/2011 - 10AM	6 hours

Never Under Estimate The Phoenix Clan Inquisition!

BY BRANDON SMITH

The Inquisitors of the Phoenix clan have long been in the shadows fighting to protect the Empire's moral paradigms and soul. Seeking out, infiltrating and interrogating maho cults, servants of the Shadowlands, vile ninja and the philosophically skewed and dishonourable Kolat. Through the use of interrogation and direct intervention the Phoenix clan Inquisitors are able to bring honor to themselves and dishonor and shame to the enemies of the Empire.

Before the Dawn sees the Phoenix clan Inquisitors brought to the forefront of the L5R CCG. The Inquisitors have long been involved in the L5R card game, however they only became truly prevalent in Celestial Edition and are yet to have a stronghold to call home. This is no longer the case, as Before the Dawn allows Phoenix players to use the *Temple of Purity* stronghold. This stronghold provides Phoenix players with a variety of deck building options, which include pure honor, dishonor and a deck fully capable of switching between both victory conditions. The Temple of Purity has a built in action phase force reduction which can't be negated, as well as a two point honor loss or gain showing similarities to *Last Step Castle* which has already proven how strong of a combination action phase defence with honor gain can be. Unlike Last Step Castle however, once its action has been used, there is little the opponent can do about it.

This honor loss or gain does requires a little bit of a set up though; some investigation and integration if you would. The target personality must have one of the culpable keywords of Ninja, Shadowlands or Kolat. This is where two important cards come

...two important cards come into play, to ensure you can discover your enemies' blasphemous acts...

into play, to ensure you can discover your enemies' blasphemous acts; *Seek the Stain* and *Asako Izuna*. *Seek the Stain* is a free spell that bows to give a target personality one of the culpable keywords. It has an additional trait that allows you to attach it from your discard pile to one of your Void shugenja. This ensures that your interrogations can continue uninterrupted. There is also nothing to stop you from discarding *Seek the Stain* to the Imperial

Favor and then attaching it to your Void shugenja for a free card draw. *Asako Izuna* is another multi-affect utility card. When *Asako Izuna* comes into play she can dishonor a personality with equal or less personal honor than her four chi and permanently gives them one of the culpable keywords.

It's important to note that the Temple of Purity's minus four force Open action doesn't require the personality to have one of the culpable keywords or for you to have a personality in play for that matter. So people will think twice before trying to blitz you. With the help of *Agasha Kokiden* and the Temple of Purity you can put your opponent



on a serious dishonor clock. Before the Dawn also provides Magistrate dishonor decks with some new tools to help ensure that their dishonor clocks have time to run out: *Detained* and *Spirit of the Truth*. *Detained* is a two gold cost presence-less defence send home on a dishonorable personality, with a two honor loss kicker. *Spirit of the Truth* provides a reusable control mechanism for dishonor decks. It permanently gives your Magistrate the ability to bow as an Open action to bow any dishonorable personality. Honor decks also received some new tools such *Words of Consecration*, which causes a one point honor loss or gain when it comes in play. Its base action targets another player's personality, if that that personality assigns to attacks you this turn, you gain one honor or two if you have a temple in play, which of course the Temple of Purity is.

With the addition of these new tools, Phoenix players are able to make a dedicated honor or dishonor deck or a versatile dishonor/honor switch. The switch deck is able to focus its dishonor on the lower honor clans such as Crab, Mantis and Scorpion while using its built-in honor loss as meta, keeping other honor decks in check as it pulls ahead. No matter which victory condition the switch deck focuses on, the other is a realistic threat. Before the Dawn also offers existing Phoenix decks some new tools. Fan favourite *Shiba Jouta* makes a return with a reusable proactive battle action even while dead. The Phoenix cavalry deck sees the addition of *Kunji*, a possible five force cavalry shugenja. The larger shugenja decks can take advantage of their high chi with the use of *A Dragon's Favor*, a free reusable proactive action. No matter what deck type a Phoenix player chooses, Before the Dawn will make one thing clear; no one should under estimate the Phoenix inquisition!



Paragons of Bushido

BY SCOTT HADSALL

Next time you build a Lion deck, take a second look at their Paragons. They're able to gain a lot of honor and take amazing battle swinging actions, but they've never truly had a home. Until now.



I have never liked switch decks. The ideological theory behind them has always appealed to me, much like many LSR players, insomuch that we'd all love to be able to go into a game and choose our path to victory. Theory and reality have never mixed.

Shamate Keep, the newest Lion stronghold from *Before the Dawn* combines a proactive send home ability with honor gain with a trait that keeps your cards from being worthless when your personalities are dishonored. The stronghold is subtle in its level of versatility, giving you a defensive option while allowing you to switch almost seamlessly into an attack deck with the ability to over commit, as you can use the stronghold on your own personality to send them home as a ready defender against your opponent's next attack phase.

Lion personalities have never been great on the defense, but the Paragon action set supplemented with Bushido Virtues like *My Life is Yours* go a long way to fixing that deficiency. Personalities like *Matsu Nishijo* and *Matsu Shunran*, who gain two force while attacking, turn frail defensive personalities into fantastic offensive ones, with the personal honor to activate the stronghold against almost every deck in the Celestial environment.

These personalities, however, have little to no applicable ability of their own, so you may be forced to drain your fate hand during an attack or defense. If only there was a way to play some of your cards from the discard pile a la *Scouting Far Afield!* Thankfully, the design team realized this and brought us *Akodo Tezuka*, who as a Battle or Open action can play a Bushido Virtue from your discard pile (removing it from the game) to keep you afloat in fate cards. This paragon has a static four force like *Matsu Kinishara* out of *Empire at War*, so he's good on the defense or offense.

The trait on *Shamate Keep* is equally subtle stating that your Paragons have a minimum personal honor equal to their base personal honor, meaning even if dishonored they maintain that base number. Cards like *Shameful and Cowardly* or *Game of Sincerity* do nothing to limit your stronghold's or fate hand's efficiency and don't prevent you from using cards like *Guided by Honor* or *Desperate Rush*. In fact, using that to your advantage you could defend with a personality, use *Game of Sincerity* yourself to save a province and then force your opponent to waste resources to kill your personality or choose to pass, allowing you to take more honor gaining actions. You could even rehonour your dishonored personality by using the stronghold ability!

Maintaining that high personal honor that the Paragons of Bushido are known for is important for cards like *Iron Will*, which negates an action performed by a personality with lower personal honor than your Paragon. This is a fantastic effect, as up to now Lion has been forced to use *Duty* or *Will* to keep their relatively small personalities in play. Even if you should choose to run no attachments in your fate deck you can still create a level of protection for your Paragons with a combination of *Iron Will*, *The Cost of Pride* and *Will*, keeping you moving towards victory.

Brothers in Battle continues the trend of Bushido Virtues with fantastic effects by giving two or three or your samurai a force bonus and a ranged four attack as a Battle or Open action. While you ideally wouldn't want to play this in Battle due to tempo loss, you can certainly make use of it in the Open phase and string it out across multiple turns with *Akodo Tezuka* creating a lasting issue for your opponent, turning some personalities into huge targets with multiple Battle actions that you can protect via *Iron Will*!

Every personality does not have to be a Paragon however, though it assuredly does help. I would be remiss if I didn't mention *Matsu Kaido*, a Hero who has one of the best Battle actions Lion has seen on a non-unique personality in a while. Force reduction has become a powerful tool this KotE season and in combination with the number of ranged attacks available to Paragons, like *Force of Spirit*, Kaido's ability to reduce a target personality's force to zero has amazing potential.

Next time you build a Lion deck, take a second look at their Paragons. They're able to gain a lot of honor and take amazing battle swinging actions, but they've never truly had a home. Until now.



Great Clans Preview

BY SHAWN CARMAN

This summer, the third sourcebook for the **Legend of the Five Rings Role-playing Game, 4th Edition** will be released. Entitled *The Great Clans*, this is the definitive source for information on the clans and the families which comprise them. Regardless of when your campaign is set, there is information here for GMs and players alike to make use of.

One of our design goals for this book was to ensure that, upon publication, every family in every clan would have at least one School in print. This means an introduction of many new mechanics, all designed with an eye toward integration with existing themes, as well as the return of many old favorites. For example, have a look at the new incarnation of the Kuni Witch Hunters!



Kuni Witch-Hunter

The Kuni Witch-Hunters are a small but highly skilled group of mystical warriors who serve the Crab Clan by hunting for mahotsukai and Shadowlands infiltration within the Empire. They travel freely through Rokugan, often disregarding clan borders and jurisdictions... much to the displeasure of local authorities. Samurai from other clans tend to regard Witch-Hunters as superstitious and ill-mannered louts, but common folk throughout the Empire respect them and seek their aid whenever supernatural threats arise. Within the Crab Clan they are treated with respect and not a little fear, since their appearance often betokens the presence of the Taint.

Techniques

Rank 1: To See the Darkness.

Witch-Hunters are taught both to sense the power of Jigoku and to crush those who carry its dreadful mark. You may attempt to detect the Taint in another person by holding your jade pendant (or another piece of jade) and staring intently at them. This is a Complex Action and requires you to make a Contested Roll of your Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness against the target's Sincerity (Deceit) / Willpower. You gain a +1k0 bonus to this roll for every full Rank of

In addition, you gain +1k1 to your rolls to resist the Shadowlands Taint and to your attack rolls when attacking a foe who is a Shadowlands creature or who you know to be Tainted.

Rank 2: To Ride the Darkness.

Witch-Hunters do not confine themselves to rooting out Tainted men and women – they also learn how to fight the creatures of the Shadowlands, and spend considerable time studying their strengths and weaknesses. Any time you are confronted by a Shadowlands

GM chooses the exact information. You may Raise on this roll to learn additional pieces of information – one strength or weakness per Raise.

Rank 3: To Strike the Darkness.

At this rank the Witch-Hunter learns to call on the power of purity to guide and strengthen his blows. You may make melee attacks as a Simple Action when your opponent is a Shadowlands creature or when you know your opponent to be Tainted.

the Taint and to the roll for your Rank Two ability. In addition, you may learn one Kiho. (If the optional rule allowing Kiho for non-Brotherhood monks is in effect, this Kiho does not count against the maximum number of Kiho you can learn, although it is subject to their other mechanical limitations such as Mastery Level.)

Rank 5: To Shatter the Darkness.

The Witch-Hunter is now the true nemesis of Jigoku's forces, able to strike down his enemies with unmatched

New Basic School: Kuni Witch-Hunter [Monk]

- ❖ **Benefit:** +1 Willpower
- ❖ **Skills:** Investigation, Jujutsu, Kenjutsu, Lore: Shadowlands, Lore: Maho, Meditation, any one skill
- ❖ **Honor:** 5.5
- ❖ **Outfit:** Rugged Clothing, Daisho, Knife, Jade Pendant, Traveling Pack, 3 koku.

another piece of jade) and staring intently at them. This is a Complex Action and requires you to make a Contested Roll of your Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness against the target's Sincerity (Deceit) / Willpower. You gain a +1k0 bonus to this roll for every full Rank of Taint the target possesses. If you succeed in the roll and the target is Tainted (has at least 1 Rank of Taint), you are able to sense the presence of the Taint and its approximate strength. If you fail the roll or the target is not Tainted, you gain no information.

Witch-Hunters do not confine themselves to rooting out Tainted men and women – they also learn how to fight the creatures of the Shadowlands, and spend considerable time studying their strengths and weaknesses. Any time you are confronted by a Shadowlands creature, you may take a Free Action to roll Lore: Shadowlands / Intelligence at TN 20 to recall either one specific strength (such as Invulnerability) or one specific weakness (such as jade) for that creature. You choose whether you recall strength or a weakness, but the

at this time the Witch-Hunter learns to call on the power of purity to guide and strengthen his blows. You may make melee attacks as a Simple Action when your opponent is a Shadowlands creature or when you know your opponent to be Tainted.

Rank 4: To Repel the Darkness.

The Witch-Hunter's intense study and spiritual training now gives him access to esoteric powers and makes it almost impossible for the forces of darkness to deceive him. You gain a +3k0 bonus to the roll for your Rank One ability to detect

learn, although it is subject to their other mechanical limitations such as Mastery Level.)

Rank 5: To Shatter the Darkness.

The Witch-Hunter is now the true nemesis of Igoku's forces, able to strike down his enemies with unmatched power. You gain a +4k1 bonus to your attack and damage rolls against Shadowlands creatures and against foes you know to be Tainted. This stacks with the attack bonus from your Rank One technique.

L5R Tournaments: Behind the Scenes

BY SCOTT HADSALL

When he isn't working as the Brand Manager for L5R, Nicolas Bongiu can be found at L5R events behind the head tables making sure tournaments like GenCon and European Championships are some of the smoothest events you've been to. Coordinating judges, making announcements and keeping everyone happy are the smallest part of his tireless labors. Creating the Kotei schedule for 2011 so that the rest of us can save the Empire is another.

Imperial Herald: *What's the most challenging aspect of determining what Kotei bids are accepted? Would you consider more or less Kotei events in the future?*

Nicolas Bongiu: Kotei tournaments have known a large success since their inception and are more than ever garnering huge interest from Tournament Organizers around the world. I would say the most difficult part is trying to get a coherent schedule and a good spread of locations. At the start of the process, there is a rather definite amount of events we'd like to see run and we have to match the existing applications with that the best we can, keeping in mind that overall location is also a determining factor: it's far easier to entertain the idea of 2 or 3 events in the same area (be it a country or a group of very close states in the U.S.) when the bids are spaced enough within the Kotei season. In general, we try to have a three week minimum between events in the same area, to allow for maximum travel.

While we are always trying to offer more Kotei tournaments to our fans, a constant increase in numbers is conflicting directly with the length of the season. I believe 60 tournaments to be the sweet spot for the Kotei season. That number, coupled with good scheduling, ensures that every weekend will have a Kotei tournament somewhere around the world, but also that the busiest weekends won't have more than five (which keeps the Story Team's work of compiling those results in the story at a manageable level).

IH: *There is currently an off-season (typically in Autumn) for L5R that you have started to fill with the Jeweled Champion tournament*

series. Will we see more events like this in the future? Will future events carry the same weight as Kotei and Jeweled events?

NB: We have strived to remove that feeling of an off-season, creating another, slightly less intense series, that we often refer to as our "Winter Court Season". At the moment, we feel that both in number and in significance, all those events are numerous enough. We have some events that impact the overarching story directly (Continental Championships, Jeweled Championships) but also events that impact the CCG directly (i.e. Name a Card, Winner's Choice).

Nothing says that the future won't dictate a new Series to be as meaningful however. Only time, and the history of the Emerald Empire, will tell.

IH: *How do Kotei contribute to the growth of the game when they're only annual events?*

NB: Kotei tournaments are large events that happen in a number of well spread locations in a relatively short time frame (and as such pull in people from various areas). This means, they present the advantages of both types of events: accessibility, and important story impact. Because of this, they have a unique Storyline effect that everyone has a chance to have an impact on, regardless of the size of their event.

IH: *With the release of Emperor Edition it seems L5R is undergoing quite a few changes. What changes will the tournament structure experience if any, and why or why not?*


NB: If you look closely at the post-GenCon season in 2010, you'll notice that it was far less an off-season than in the past and



you'll be able to see what our blueprint for events in the future will be.

Our goal is to offer our fans significant Story events during that period. The Jeweled Events and the Continental Championships (European, South America and Pacific Rim) clearly fit in that vision and given their attendance last year, are bound to continue. We are however changing the schedule a little bit in order to increase the story impact of the events: in 2011, we are aiming at two Jeweled Events per month starting mid-September (in locations that do not conflict with a Continental Championship). That way, from mid-September to mid-January, impact on the overarching story of the game and the Empire will be constant.

We fully realize however that not all Tournament Organizers can run such events and due to their finite number, we also want to offer more "local" tournaments so that players unable to travel long distances outside of Major Championships or Kotei can still impact the game they love. That means that Winner's Choice, Stronghold Store, Name a Card tournaments – as well as special series such as Solving the Riddle – will be primarily run during that time frame, making it as busy (if not more) than Kotei season, and ensuring that every player, regardless of his or her traveling funds, has a chance to affect the story and partake in the unique L5R CCG play experience.

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a dark, form-fitting armor with a large circular gold-colored emblem on the chest. She has a long, dark cape flowing behind her. She is holding a sword in her right hand. The background is a dark, rocky landscape with a greenish-blue sky.

When the dawn finally breaks,
Heroes will emerge.

BEFORE THE DAWN



WAR OF HONOR

Know your enemies ... Marshal your forces ... Choose your path.

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